

A
SERMON

PREACH'D in the

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Cathedral Church of SARUM,

On SUNDAY, *July 22.* 1716.

AT THE

ASSIZES

HELD There.

Talbot (Wm)

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
WILLIAM } Lord Bishop of SARUM.
Talbot }

*Publish'd at the Request of the High-Sheriff, and
Gentlemen of the Grand Jury.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. CHURCHILL, at the *Black Swan* in *Pater-
Noster-Row*; and J. BOWYER, at the *Rose* in *Ludgate-
street.* MDCCXVI.

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Three fourths price.

thence to excite those of our Communion to thank-
 fulness to God, for following and continuing in



ACTS II. 47. latter Part.

*And the Lord added to the Church
 daily, such as should be saved.*



THE Word Church having, of late
 especially, been so much talked of,
 and so little understood: The
Romanists having confined it to
 their Communion, and excluded
 all others from all Pretence to it;
 and some among us having, out of a pretended, or
 one would rather hope, mistaken Zeal for our
 Church, gone into such Measures for the Preserva-
 tion, as too evidently tend to the Destruction of
 it, having by their loud Clamours of imaginary
 Dangers, brought it into real ones: It may not be
 unseasonable, to settle the Notion of the Word
 Church, and to prove against the *Romanists*, That
 we of the Reform'd Church of *England*, are
 Members of a True and a Pure Church, accord-
 ing to the Scripture Account of a Church; and

thence to excite those of our Communion to Thankfulness to God, for bestowing and continuing so great a Blessing to us; and also to point out to them the true Methods of preserving it, and transmitting it to our Posterity; what Things are to be done, and what avoided by them, in order to that End: And this I shall take Occasion to attempt from the Text before me.

In this Chapter, we have an Account of St. Peter's Excellent Sermon on the Day of Pentecost; of the great Subject, and of the Glorious Success of it: His great Design was to prove to the *Jews*, the great and fundamental Article of the Christian Religion; That Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom they had crucified, and God had raised from the Dead, was the Messias or the Christ. This he demonstrates, both from the Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messias, which he shews had their Accomplishment in *Jesus*, and also from the Miracles which God had wrought by him in the midst of them.

This Discourse had so good an Effect upon the Hearers, that that Day there were 3000 converted and baptized; and of these, with the former Disciples, continuing stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers, it is said in my Text, that *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*

Now this is the first Account that we meet with in the Bible, of a Christian Church in Being: Our Saviour had foretold that he would build a Church, but we read not of one built till now. This therefore being the truly Primitive Church,

we may best learn from her, what are the Characters of a Christian Church, or the Requisites to constitute one. This Society is stiled by the Holy Ghost, — *The Church*; the Lord added to *the Church*; and a Church in which Salvation was to be obtained, for the Lord added daily such as *should be saved*; and therefore we may conclude, that where-ever the Characters, by which this first Church is described, are to be found, there is the True Church; and if she corrupts not her self, by receiving any destructive Additions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life, a Church in which Salvation is ordinarily to be had.

That which I shall endeavour in my present Discourse upon these Words, shall be,

I. To enquire briefly, what are the Characters of, or Requisites to constitute a Christian Church, according to the Description of this first Apostolical Church.

II. To shew, that those Characters and Requisites agree to, and are to be found in the Reform'd Church of *England*, of which we are Members; and that she receives no Additions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life, which may destroy or corrupt them.

And then the Business of my Application shall be,

1st, To excite your Thankfulness to God, for planting very early a True Christian Church in this Island; for wonderfully Reforming it, after it had been desperately corrupted with Superstition and

and Idolatry; for delivering it from the frequent and dangerous Plots and Attempts of our Popish Adversaries; and for continuing it pure to our Times.

2^{dly}, To persuade you to those Things, which are necessarily required on our Parts, in order to the continuing of this great Blessing to us, and the transmitting it to our Posterity.

1. I am to enquire briefly, what are the Characters of, or Requisites to constitute a true Christian Church, according to the Description of this first Apostolical Church.

Now this Church was a certain Number of Persons, consisting of some Apostles, some former Disciples and new Converts, which repented, believed, and were baptized, in the Name of Jesus Christ; and continued in hearing the Word preached, receiving the Sacraments, and joining in publick Prayers: So that all the Requisites to make a true Church, that we learn from hence, are these:

1. That it be a Society of Persons, consisting of Pastors duly qualified and commission'd for the Work of the Ministry, as the Apostles were; and of People baptized into, and professing the Faith of Jesus Christ.

2. That the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, be taught and profess'd among them.

3. That the Sacraments of Christ's Institution be duly administer'd and receiv'd. And,

Lastly,

Lastly, That they have a Publick Worship, wherein they jointly present their Prayers to God.

If then in this Church there is, *1st*, A lawful Ministry; if, *2^{dly}*, The whole Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, be profess'd and taught in it; if, *3^{dly}*, The Sacraments of his Institution be duly administer'd; if, *lastly*, There be a publick Worship for us to join in, agreeable to the Scriptures; then are all the Requisites to make a true Church, to be found in ours: And that we have all these Requisites in our Church, I am now to prove.

1. I say we have a lawful Ministry; our Bishops and Priests are true Bishops and Priests, who received Imposition of Hands from such as were qualified to lay Hands upon them, and their Orders valid. And this our Adversaries cannot deny, without destroying, at the same time, their own Succession and Orders: For those Holy Bishops, whom God was pleased to make use of, for the Reformation of our Church, did receive their Orders from those that were of the Church of *Rome*; and from those blessed Reformers, our Bishops and Priests derive their Succession. So that, if they of the Church of *Rome* have any true Succession from the Apostles, as they assert, and any good Orders; our Succession likewise, (if we can but make it good since the Reformation, which certainly is no difficult thing) must be equally true, and our Orders equally valid, and consequently we have a lawful Ministry.

2^{dly},

2dly, In our Church is profess'd and taught the whole Doctrine of Christ, and the Apostles. And this must certainly be true, if the Holy Scriptures and the three Ancient Creeds contain that Doctrine; for these our Church receives and owns; and not only so, but willingly embraces any thing else that can be made out to be of Apostolical Tradition, and universally receiv'd in all Ages of the Church. But as for Traditions of later Date, and which have been only receiv'd in a Part of the Church, which have no Foundation in, but are rather repugnant to the Scriptures: These she cannot by any means allow to be of equal Authority with the Scriptures, nor dares she receive them as such. And yet she cannot, upon this account, be justly taxed, as wanting any Part of Christ's or his Apostles Doctrine; since the Reason why she receives not these, is, because she cannot find, that Christ or his Apostles ever taught them, but rather the contrary. Thus, for Instance; We do not believe nor teach you, that the Pope of Rome is the Head and Governor of the whole Church; and the Reason is, because we find no mention thereof in the Scripture, nor of any other Head of the Church than Christ, who, in the 1st Chap. of the *Ephesians*, is said to be the Head over all Things to the Church, which is his Body: And again, the 1st of *Colos.* He is the Head of the Body, the Church. Thus, likewise, we do not believe nor teach you, That the Substance of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament is, by Consecration, changed into the Substance of Christ's Natural Body and Blood;

nor

nor does the Scripture teach any such thing ; which assures us, that Christ's Body is in Heaven, and there must be till the Restitution of all Things, and consequently cannot be upon the Altar : And also expressly calls the Elements, Bread and Wine, after Consecration. And as for that Expression of our Saviour's, upon which this pretended Change is founded, namely, the Words of Institution, *This is my Body* ; it cannot be suppos'd, that either our Saviour intended, or the Apostles understood them, in the literal Sense ; for, for him whilst he was alive in the midst of them, to take into his Hands, and give them his natural Body and Blood, to be bruised with their Teeth, and eaten, drank, and swallowed into their Bellies ; and yet this same Body, at the same time and after, to remain alive, and sound, and whole, without any the least visible Change : For that whole and entire Body, with the Blood in his Veins, to be that broken Body and Blood shed, which was not broken or shed till the Day after, was such a prodigiously strange thing, as could not but have rais'd Scruples in Persons less apt to make Objections than the Apostles were wont to be, in Matters of less Difficulty ; and yet neither do we find them raising, nor our Saviour preventing or answering any ; so that we cannot imagine, that he either meant, or they apprehended any other Sense of his Words, than that plain and easy one, which other Expressions of the like Nature, that are frequent in Scripture, do, by our Adversaries own Confession, carry along with them. As when the Rock is

laid to be Christ, and the Cup the New Testament in his Blood, namely, a figurative Sense, to wit, that it was the Type, or Figure, or Representation of it. And this any one will the more easily believe, who considers the Expressions that were used in the *Jewish* Passover, to which this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper succeeds; and how in this, as well as other Cases, our Lord was pleased to accommodate his Institutions, as near as might be, to the Ceremonies and Phrases used among the *Jews*. Now in their Paschal Feast, the Master of the House took Bread and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, *This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers eat in Egypt*: Our Saviour, in his Institution, takes Bread and breaks it, and gives it to them, saying, *This is my Body which is broken for you*. As then that Bread which the *Jews* took, and said of it, *This is the Bread of Affliction*, &c. was not that very Bread, which their Fathers had eaten so long ago, but was only intended for the Type or Figure of it; so neither could the Apostles, who were *Jews*, and acquainted with this Phrase or Way of speaking, understand that Bread which our Lord held in his Hand, and of which he said, *This is my Body which is broken for you*, to be that real Body of his, which they then saw before them whole at the Table; but the Type and Figure of that Body, which was shortly to be broken for them upon the Cross.

We do not believe nor teach you, That there is in the Mass, or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a true proper Sacrifice, propitiatory for the Sins of
the

the Quick and Dead; but yet we cannot think we want any thing in this Point, which the Scripture teaches; which has most expressly asserted, that Christ is, and can be offer'd but once; and has given us these Reasons for it: 1st, That one Offering was sufficient, because by that *he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* 2^{dly}, That Christ must often have suffered, if he were often offered; for without Suffering, no true Offering; *without Shedding of Blood, no Remission.*

We neither believe nor teach you, such a third Place in another Life as Purgatory, wherein those that have repented, and to whom the eternal Punishment of their Sins is remitted, must yet suffer such Pains, as differ not from Hell in Agony, but Duration only, till they have paid the Remainder of that Debt of Temporal Pain, which was not paid in this Life by their Satisfaction, and which they therefore owe; but in this we think we want not any thing that the Scripture has made necessary, which informs us but of two Places after this Life, the one proper to the Elect and Blessed of God, the other proper to the Damn'd; and which assures us, that those *that die in the Lord, are blessed from thenceforth, in that they rest from their Labours.*

We teach you not, That there is a Stock of Merits in the Church, which being applied, will be beneficial to the freeing you from Temporary Punishments, and to the speedy releasing of you from Purgatory. We require not your Money (pardon us this Wrong) for Masses and Indulgences for that Purpose.

These and several other Doctrines held in the Church of *Rome*, indeed we have not in ours ; but yet they being such as are grounded upon no Warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to it, we cannot, for wanting them, be said to be deficient in the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, by whom whatsoever Doctrines have been delivered, whether they be contained in the Scriptures, summ'd up in the Three Creeds, or handed down by universal Tradition, we readily own and embrace. And as we have this second Requisite, the whole Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, so also have we the

3^d, Namely, The Sacraments of Christ's Institution duly administer'd. We have those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as they of the Church of *Rome* ; the former more agreeably administer'd to the Patterns in Scripture, and the latter more entire than they have. And as for those other Five which they call Sacraments, Confirmation, Orders, Marriage, Penance, Extreme Unction ; as to the Four former of them, tho' we give them not the Name of Sacraments, yet we have the Things. As for Confirmation, our Church has appointed an Office particularly for it ; and has a Rubrick enjoining Children, so soon as they are come to competent Age, and instructed in the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, and the Catechism, to be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, to take upon themselves the Vow that was made in their Names at their Baptism, to have the Bishop lay his Hands upon

upon them, and pray over them. As for Holy Orders, we have it in great Veneration: We think no one capable of exercising the Ministry, till he be commission'd to it, by a lawful Imposition of Hands: We hold it to be the Bishop's Part only to ordain: We have the Three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, which have been in the Church from the Apostles Time. As for Marriage, we acknowledge it to be, what the Apostle says, *Honourable in all Men*, in Priests as well as Laymen; and we have a Grave and Reverend Form appointed in our Liturgy, for the Solemnization of it. And then for Penance, this we have likewise, tho' we do not exact from you a particular Confession of all your most private Faults to a Priest, as of Necessity, in order to the Forgiveness of them; tho' we do not send you on tedious Pilgrimages to this or that Saint, to go bare-headed or bare-footed, to say over so many *Pater-Nosters* or *Ave-Maries*, to cut and lash your Bodies for the Sins of your Souls; yet does our Church refuse no Sort of Confession, either Publick or Private, that may be necessary to the quieting of Mens Consciences, or to the exercising of that Power, of Binding and Loosing, which our Lord has left to his Church. But now, tho' our Church has these Four Things, yet can she not allow them to be Sacraments, as are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; nor in the strict Notion of the Word in which she takes it; they either not being of Christ's Institution, not necessary to Salvation, or not generally necessary to all. As for the Fifth, that of Extreme Unction, indeed we have it not, nor see any

any Reason for it; it is, as in Use among them, an anointing of sick Persons with Oyl, consecrated for the Purpose, for the Benefit of their Souls; and this they ground upon that of St. James, *If any Man be sick, let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oyl in the Name of the Lord; and the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* But this Anointing referring, as is evident, to the Health of the Body, and to those miraculous Gifts of Healing, which the Apostles and first Christians were endued with, and the Cures they wrought by such Anointing, and that miraculous Power of Healing being long since ceased, we cannot look upon these Words to contain in them the Institution of a Sacrament, nor the Ceremony of Anointing, to belong to us.

But what of this Advice does belong to us, we fail not to obey: Our Church advises the Sick to send for the Elders of the Church, to unburden their Consciences to them, if they find them troubled with any weighty Matter; the Elders pray over the Sick for the Restoration of their bodily Health, if God sees good, but chiefly for the Salvation of their Souls; and by the Ministry of God's Word, they give them ghostly Advice and Comfort, and Absolution, if they humbly and heartily desire it, for the Ease and Quiet of their Minds. So that whatsoever of these Seven we can find any Warrant for in Scripture, our Church has, as well as the Church of Rome; tho' we give the Name of Sacraments only to two of them; those two only being appointed by Christ, as generally necessary to Salvation. Last-

Lastly, We have a publick Worship to join in, agreeable to the Scriptures, the Fourth and Last Requisite we mentioned, to make a true Church. And what Part of Prayer, has not our indulgent Mother plentifully provided for her Children in her Liturgy; are there not meek and humble Confessions of Sins, and those as full as could be contrived for the whole Church to join in; are there not most earnest and devout Supplications for Pardon, pathetic Requests for particular Graces, submissive Petitions for Temporal Blessings, comprehensive Intercessions for others, even our very Enemies; for all Men Seraphical Hymns, and Pious Thanksgivings.

Has she not provided for the Solemnity and Order of her publick Administrations, by appointing Ceremonies, for their Number few, for their Nature decent and edifying? Indeed, she has not that vast Number of ridiculous Ceremonies, which are burdensome, and rather conduce to the taking of the Mind from what it should attend to, than serve to Decency and Edification; she has none of that dumb Shew, and Pageantry of Devotion, which is to be seen in the Church of Rome, which seems not agreeable to those Worshipers, that should Worship God *in Spirit and in Truth*. She has no Prayers in her Service in an unknown Tongue, which can only amuse the Congregation, and which they cannot join in; but surely she is not upon this Account defective in her Worship, if St. Paul's Judgment may be taken,

She has no Addresses to the Blessed Virgin, and to Saints; but yet neither is her Worship defective in this

this Respect, if the Scriptures may be our Rule herein, wherein is neither Command, nor one Example, in the Old and New Testament, for offering up the Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving to any but God, but many Prohibitions of such Worship. We refuse not that Respect which is due to the Blessed Virgin, and Saints departed; we call her Blessed according to her own Prediction; we honour the Memories of Saints, name them at our Altars, bless God for the Excellencies that shined in them, and beg for Grace to imitate their Examples; but we dare not by praying to them, give them that Worship which God has incommunicably reserved to himself; and which if they were sensible of, and we could hear their Replies, they would certainly forbid, with a *see you do it not.*

We give not any Worship to Images, yet cannot think our Church defective in this, so long as the Second Commandment, however it be left out in many of the Offices of the Roman Church, stands unexpunged in the Sacred Leaves of the Bible. In a Word, our whole Worship is so ordered, that there is nothing wanting in it *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.* If then these Characters of a true Church agree to ours; if, as I have shewn, she has a Succession of Bishops as certain as Rome it self; if Pastors and Teachers duly qualified and ordained; if

if she holds the whole Faith and Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles; if she has all the Sacraments of Christ's Appointment, and those entire; if she has a Liturgy most agreeable to the Primitive Worship, then are all the Requisites to make a true Church to be found in her. And as she is not defective in any Thing required to make her a true Church, so does she not abound with any Thing, that can make her a corrupt or unsound one; she requires no Propositions to be believed, which must be false, if we can be assured that any Thing else is true; none that offer Violence to our Reason, overthrow the plainest Evidence of our Senses, destroy the Truth of Christ's natural Body, and invalidate the Force of his Miracles; none that impeach his Character, as the *Messias*, by implying a Failure in his Discharge of the Offices which belong'd to him as such; none that thwart the Purpose of his Manifestation, by encouraging Sin, which he came to destroy. She presumes not to dispence with any Part of his Institutions, nor does she audaciously pretend to make any Additions to them. She does not in her Worship provoke God to Jealousy, by giving his Honour to Graven Images; she affronts not our one Mediator, by joyning others with him; nor does she amuse the People with Ministrations in a strange Tongue, in which they cannot tell, whether they are blessing God, or cursing Men. In short, she imposes no Terms of Communion, either as to Faith or Practice, upon her Members, which are not reconcileable with the Scriptures; all which I could easily

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make out; but as Time will not allow, so neither is it necessary to enlarge on this Head, either on the Account of our Adversaries, (whose great Charge against us, is not so much for our positive Doctrines, as for our negative Articles) not so much for what we do hold and practise, as for what we do not hold and Practice; or on your Account, before whom I speak, from whom, I trust, none of these Things are hid.

Now if these Things are so, then as our Church is a true Christian Church, as having all the Characters by which the first Christian Church was described; so is she a Pure Church, as having received no Additions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Rules of Life; which may corrupt her: Which was the Point I undertook to prove, and am now to apply. And,

Ist, I am to excite your Thankfulness to God, for planting very early, a true Christian Church in this Island; for wonderfully reforming it, after it had been desperately corrupted with Superstition and Idolatry; for frequently preserving it so reformed, from being again overrun with them; and for mercifully continuing it pure down to our Times.

And pure indeed our Church at this Time is; most agreeable to the Scriptures, are the Religion and Worship, profess'd and exercis'd in our Communion: But it was not always so with us. We are now, blessed be his Name, Light in the Lord, but were sometime Darkness. God indeed did visit us early, with the glorious Light of his Gos-

Gospel, which did open upon our *British* Ancestors, most probably in the very Time of the Apostles. But when that *Cloud*, which arse upon the Dissolution of the *Roman* Empire, at first, indeed, *little like a Man's Hand*, did by Degrees spread it self, so that almost the whole *Western* Heaven was darkned, we were cover'd with that Midnight Blackness, and for many Ages did our Ancestors grope in that thick Darkness of Popish Error, Superstition, and Idolatry; in which a great Part of *Christendom* continues to this Day. But it pleased God to raise up our holy Reformers, who taking heed to that sure Word of Prophecy, the Holy Scriptures, *as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place*; He did by their Means, make the Day to dawn again upon us; they discover'd those Absurdities in Doctrine, Corruptions in Discipline, Superstition and Idolatry in Worship, which Avarice and Ambition had, during *their Hour*, and the *Power of Darkness*, the Times of Ignorance I mean, introduced into the Church: They rooted up, in a good Measure, those Tares which the Enemy had Sown in the Night while Men slept, and secured the good Corn; they overthrew the Tables, and drove out of the *Temple* the Money-Changers, those impious Barterers for Sins, and and restored the House of God to its Primitive Use, to be a House of Prayer, where he should be worshipped in Spirit and Truth.

The Evil Spirit being thus ejected, 'twas no wonder that he *walked through dry Places*, seeking Rest, and found none, till he could return to the House

whence he came out; and it was not very long, after it was Swept and Garnished, before he found an Opportunity, upon the Suspected Death of that Pious young Prince, King Edward the VIth, to come again into it: And indeed he came with as great Wrath, as if he had known that he had but a short Time; the Number of Bishops, of Ministers, of Laity of both Sexes, who perished by their hard Usage in Prison, or were burnt at the Stake, under the succeeding Queen, for the Sake of their Religion, was so great, that we may accommodate the Words of our Saviour, in Relation to the Destruction of Jerusalem, to those Times, that *except those Days had been shortned, there should no Protestant have been saved or escaped; but for the Elects Sake those Days were shortned*, and God put an End to that Persecution, with that Reign.

Upon the Succession of our glorious Elizabeth to the Throne, the Reformation reviv'd, and was carried on to Perfection; and notwithstanding the many secret Conspiracies, and open Attempts of the Romish Faction, encouraged by the Pope, and assisted by Princes of that Communion, to destroy it, God preserved our Holy Religion in its Purity to this Nation, during the long and happy Reign of that Queen, during that of her Successor, and for many Years of that of his Son; till being provoked by our Sins, he permitted an unnatural Civil War to break out in the Kingdom, which ended not but with the Subversion of the Government, the Destruction of the Church, and the execrable Murder of the King.

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From that Time indeed, our *Jerusalem* seem'd to be an heap of Stones buried in Ruins, and very unlikely to rise again into that beautiful Building, which it had been; but God was pleas'd in Judgment to remember Mercy, to turn our Captivity, and comfort us again, for the Time in which he had plagu'd us, by restoring the Royal Family, and with it our Government and Church: And whatever Inclinations to Popery, some of that Family might have brought Home with them, whatever Interest and Power some known or disguised Papists might have had at that Time, whatever Designs were laid here, whatever Measures were concerted with the great Enemy of the Protestant Religion Abroad, whatever Cunning Artifices were used, whatever Force was intended to be used, to bring Popery back again hither, God over-rul'd and disappointed them all; and our Reform'd Church, and Holy Religion were preserv'd to us during that Reign.

What happen'd in the succeeding one, I need not recount; you must remember, you cannot forget the large Steps that were then taken, to root out the *Northern* Heresy, to bring this Church under the Tyranny of the Bishop of *Rome*; what dreadful Apprehensions we all had of an impending Ruin, our Hearts even failing us for Fear, and for looking after those Things which we thought were then coming upon us: But God again rais'd up a Deliverer for us, and by the safe and seasonable Arrival of his late Majesty of Glorious Memory among us, brought about that happy Revolution; to which, however
ungrateful

ungrateful People, ungrateful to God as well as Man, vilify or condemn it, We under God, owe the Enjoyment, not only of our Civil Rights, but of our Reform'd Establish'd Religion for Twenty-Seven Years backwards; that we have our present Gracious King upon the Throne; that the Succession is settled in a Protestant Family; that under Him and them, if we do not by our Sins and Follies hinder so great a Blessing, we and our Posterity may Worship God in the Beauty of Holiness, in the Communion of the Church of *England*, for many Generations. And do not these Mercies of God, call for a grateful Acknowledgment from us? Alas! without those gracious Interpositions of Providence, we had still sat, as our Popish Ancestors did heretofore, *in Darkness and the Shadow of Death*; 'tis of his tender Mercy, that the Day Spring on High hath visited us, that we are called out of that Darkness, into his marvellous Light; that instead of having the Scripture, that Light to our Feet, shut up from us; instead of being muffled up in an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience, of being obliged to contradict our Senses, to believe against Reason, and pray without Understanding; to invoke those as Saints, of whom some never were in the World, and others were Scandals to it; to give Divine Worship to Images and Relicks, and a Piece of Bread: We have the free Use of the Bible in our own Tongue; have no Doctrines imposed upon our Faith, nor Duties in our Practice, but what the Scriptures plainly teach, and impartial Reason must approve; have all our Wor-
ship

ship administer'd in a Language we understand; have all our Addresses offer'd up to God through the only Mediation of the one Mediator betwixt God and Man, Christ Jesus; and all our Religious Worship paid to him, to whom alone it is due, the Lord our God, whom only we must serve. These and all other the inestimable Benefits of the Reformation, and Blessings which we now enjoy in the Communion of this Church, are owing to the Grace and Bounty of our merciful God; and if we have a just Sense of them, we shall not want any further Arguments, to engage us to shew our unfeigned Thankfulness to him for them: Nor, in the second place,

2. To persuade us to those things, which are necessarily required on our Parts, in order to the continuing of this great Blessing to us, and the transmitting it to our Posterity; and they are,

1st, An hearty Concern for, and a zealous Endeavour, in our several Capacities, to secure His present Majesty's Government, and the Succession of this Crown in His Illustrious Protestant Family.

It is just Matter of Wonder and Amazement, that, after so many repeated Oaths, wherewith the Subjects of this Kingdom have engaged themselves to God and the King, That they will bear Faith and true Allegiance to His Majesty, that him they will defend against the *Pretender*, whom they have solemnly abjur'd, and all his Adherents, it should be needful to urge any other Motives, besides that of the sacred Obligation of an Oath, to persuade them to do that, which they have, in the most awful manner, call'd God to witness
that

that they would do. But here is the Obligation of Interest, added to that of an Oath, upon all true Members of our Church; the Safety and Happiness, nay, the very Being whereof, under God, depend upon the Preservation of His Majesty's Government, and the Succession of the Crown in His Royal House. Enquire into the Times of your Fathers, ask of the Nations round about, whether ever a Popish Prince did protect a Protestant Church; nay, whether they have not always endeavour'd, when they have had Power to do it, to extirpate Protestants out of their Dominions, that the very Name of them might not be had in Remembrance. This is what their Religion obliges them to do, under Pain of Anathemas and Excommunications here, and Damnation hereafter.

This is our present Case: We have a King upon the Throne, adorn'd with all the Virtues that can recommend a Gracious Prince to a Wise People; One that lives in constant Communion with our Church; that has given His Royal Word and Oath to protect and encourage it; and has never omitted giving Proofs of his Sincerity, whenever any Occasion has offer'd, of shewing His Kindness and Favour to it: One who is bless'd with a Flourishing Royal Issue, under whom we may hope the great Blessings may be transmitted to our Posterity, which we enjoy under him.

On the other Side, here has been a Rebellion rais'd to dethrone His Majesty, and set up a *Pretender*; one that has suck'd in the Principles of Popery and Tyranny with his Milk; been educated in the
cruel

etuel Maxims of Rome and France, and is oblig'd, by his Religion, to destroy the Northern Heresy, particularly the Bulwark of it, the Church of England; and if he succeeds, we have in View a long Train of Popish Princes after him, to perfect what he shall have left undone of that blessed Work. God has indeed been pleas'd to give Success to His Majesty's Counsels and Forces, and to deliver up the Men, that lifted up their Hands against our Lord the King. But though the Rebels have been defeated, is the Spirit of Rebellion suppress'd? Has His Majesty's unparallel'd Clemency soften'd the Hearts of His Enemies, or have the few Examples of Justice that have been made, struck any Terror into them? Has not the former been imputed to Cowardice and Fear, and have not the latter been call'd Acts of Cruelty and Tyranny? Is there not Reason to believe, that though the Traytors appear not now in the Field, they are yet plotting in their private Cabals? Do we not every Day see the Results of their dark Councils, in the vile Methods that are used to keep up a Ferment in the Nation, by most monstrous Lies and infamous Libels, by wearing Marks of Distinction, by Tumults and Riots; and that even in the Metropolis, where His Majesty was residing, and the Parliament sitting? What can be the Meaning of such Audaciousness, but to keep up the Spirit of their Party here, and encourage their Friends abroad? And what is all that for, but that both may be ready, upon a favourable Opportunity, to make another Attempt against our present Settlement,

and in it against our Establish'd Church? And if this be the Case, can there be a Doubt, how Protestants, how Church-of-England-Men, ought to behave themselves in such a Conjunction? Can we pretend to have any Value for our Religion, and not act to the utmost of our Capacities for the Defender of it, in Opposition to one, who, if ever he be settled here, must destroy it? Ought we not to express at least as much Zeal for the Preservation of our happy Constitution, when we have the Government, the Laws, and I trust, God himself on our Side, as our Enemies, in Defiance to all these, have shewn and do shew for the Subversion of it? Let not any one think, that Caution and Reserve will be of any Advantage to him, in Case the Pretender should prevail; no, the timorous Neuters, and even the wicked Abettors of his Cause, will share the same Fate with those that honestly and bravely oppose it: His Zeal, his Revenge, will know no more Distinction, than the barbarous Duke D'Alva's Sword did in the *Low-Countries*; there can be no Merit in Protestants; Hereticks, let them behave themselves how they will, are Hereticks still; and if they intend to continue such, they must resolve to suffer as such.

We have had but Two Popish Reigns, openly avow'd to be such, since the Reformation, and they have both proved the Truth of this Observation; in both of them, those Protestants who had been most forward and zealous in bringing those Princes to the Throne, were the first that found Cause to repent of their Folly and

and Madneſs. Let us then ſhew our ſelves Rational Creatures, endow'd with Underſtanding and Courage, that God has not given us the Spirit of Fear or Stupidity, but of *Power and of Love, and of a ſound Mind.* God has viſibly and wonderfully appear'd for us, and what then need we fear, who are againſt us? Let us reſolutely do our Duties, in our reſpective Stations, for the ſtrengthening of the Hands of the Government, and the diſheartning all the Enemies of it; and let us, in our daily Addreſſes to God, beg of him to look upon the Face of his Anointed; to protect his Perſon, and all his Royal Family; to preſide in his Councils, and go forth with his Armies; to eſtabliſh the Thing that he hath wrought for us; that under him and his Royal Iſſue, this Church may long and joyfully ſerve God, in all godly Quietneſs. This is the *Fiſt.*

The *Second Duty* required of us, is, carefully to avoid all Factions and Diviſions among our ſelves. *An Houſe, or a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf,* our Saviour has told us, *cannot ſtand, but is brought to Deſolation;* and it is moſt equal and juſt in God, to ſuffer thoſe, who, contrary to his Commands, *are biting and devouring one another, to be conſumed one of another.* This would be the Caſe of a Society, diſtracted with Parties and Factions, though they had no common Enemy to deal with, their mutual Animofities, and intefline Diviſions would undo them without any foreign Help: But how much more

certain must the Ruin of that Body be, who, having a powerful and implacable Enemy incessantly watching all Opportunities to attack them, regardless of their common Danger, instead of uniting Hearts and Hands to oppose the Enemy and defend themselves, shall turn their Arms upon one another, and assist their Enemy to destroy them all.

The Church of England has all along been the Object, against which the Church of Rome has form'd her deepest Designs, and exerted her greatest Force, as being the chief Barrier of the Reformation; which being once broke thro', the other Parts of it would not be able to hold out long against her. She finds that Argument will not do, all the Topicks from Scripture, Antiquity, and Reason being on our Side: She has try'd open Force and secret Plots, and they have not succeeded: She has moved her Attacks from one Side to another, as *Balak took Balaam from Hill to Hill to curse Israel*: She has cursed us at her Altars, but how could those Curses hurt them, whom God hath blessed? Yet she has one Method left, more effectual than her Swords, or Powder, or Anathemas; and that is, to serve us as the *Philistines did Sampson*; his Strength lay in his Hair, and when they had corrupted a treacherous *Dalilah*, to discover where his great Strength lay, and to lull him asleep on her Lap till his Head was shaven, his Strength went from him, and he became weak like other Men; they made Sport with him, and he perished with them.

But how much more

My Brethren, our Strength, under God, lies in our Unity, and this our Enemies know: they need not employ Spies to discover it, though they do many Agents to intoxicate us with their Philters into a stupid Security, or rather fatal Lethargy, while they deprive us of our Strength, by breaking us into Parties; the Consequence of which, if we awaken not in Time, must be, that we shall become first their Derision, and then their Prey: they will first insult us, and then destroy us.

If then we have any Respect for our Church, let us guard ourselves against these treacherous Endeavours of our Enemies to ruin her, by dividing the Members of it: Let all distinguishing Names, particularly that ridiculous and senseless one of *High-Church* and *Low-Church*, be for ever forgotten. We all believe the same Articles of Faith, agree in the same Rules of Practice, join in the same Worship, communicate in the same Sacraments, submit to the same Discipline; What Foundation is there then for a Distinction of the Members of this Church, that has any Difference to support it? Let us convince our Enemies, that we truly love and value the Church of *England*, and prefer her Safety to any private Considerations; that in vain the Net is spread in the Sight of any Bird; that we see through their Artifices, and are sensible of their wicked Designs; that as they cannot force us, they shall not trick us out of our Religion; that whatever little Differences there may be among us, as to other Matters, we are resolved to unite, as one Man, in the Defence of that. Were all the Members

Members of this Church thus at Unity among themselves, she would not need to fear the Gates of Rome, or of Hell; especially, if we would,

3. In the last place, be perswaded to that which is the most likely way to prevail with God to continue this invaluable Blessing to us, and transmit it to our Posterity; and that is, to endeavour to walk worthy of it, by adorning our Holy Profession with an Holy Conversation. The Conditions upon which the Continuance of all Spiritual Blessings is suspended, are the making a right Use and Improvement of them; and the greater those Vouchments are, the greater Returns will be expected: And if we do not answer God's Expectations, we may justly fear that he will verify upon us, what Christ threatned to the Jews, *That he will take away the Kingdom of Heaven from us, and give it to a Nation, that shall bring forth the Fruits thereof.*

What Enemies then are all such to this Church, who pretend to be Members of her, and yet lead Lives that would bring a Scandal upon the loosest Religion? Profess a mighty Zeal for her, but shew it chiefly in talking and debauching for her: How much more effectually would such, if they resolve to continue in their wicked Courses, shew their Kindness to the Church, by renouncing her Communion? An open Enemy may be better born, and more easily guarded against, than such false Friends, who treat the Church as Judas did his Master, pretend to kiss her, and cry, Hail, when they

they are treacherously betraying her to the Insults of her Enemies, and the Judgments of God.

My Brethren, if we would engage God to preserve this Church to us, let us express our Love and Zeal, not so much in *Talking*, as in *Living* for her: Let us shew the Excellency of her Constitution above that of any other, by the Influence it has upon her Members; by making us more Holy and Just, more Temperate and Meek, more Humble and Charitable, more Eminent in all Christian Graces, than others. This would be the way to prevail with God, to continue to hedge, and fence, and secure this Vineyard, when he shall see the Charge he has been at, turn to so good Account; the Manuring and Cultivating he has bestowed upon it, answered by such a Crop of the Fruits of Righteousness. And this, with his Blessing, will be also the most probable Method to enlarge and strengthen her, by bringing such, as have hitherto separated from her, into the Pale of her Communion; who seeing the *Light of our good Works* shining with such a Brightness before them, may be thereby induced to join with *one Mind and Mouth with us, in glorifying our Father which is in Heaven.*

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